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Patriarch Daniel: We took the profession of faith out of church walls and showed it publicly to the city



‘We took the profession of our faith out of church walls and showed it publicly to the city,’ the Patriarch of Romania told the people gathered on the Patriarchate’s Hill in Bucharest at the conclusion of the annual Palm Sunday procession, a day before the Orthodox Church commemorates Christ’s glorious Entry into Jerusalem.

‘This beautiful day blessed by God is a prediction of the Holy Week of the Passions of our Saviour Jesus Christ, of His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection,’ His Beatitude added.

‘The Palm Sunday Procession is a foretasting of the joy of Holy Pascha,’ Patriarch Daniel told the thousands of believers who attended the march.

‘Now, on the Hill of Joy, we can see the attendance, as at Easter Vigil, of a multitude of people, clergy and believers, who have their faces shining with light

from the light of the Resurrection and with joy from the joy of Christ's Resurrection.'

Thousands of clergy and believers lined the streets of Bucharest to remember Christ's glorious Entry into Jerusalem but also to profess their faith publicly during the annual Palm Sunday procession on Saturday afternoon.

They walked from Radu Voda Monastery to the Patriarchal Cathedral carrying palm and willow branches and chanting religious hymns. The procession was overseen by the Assistant Bishop to the Bucharest Archdiocese, His Grace Bishop Timotei of Prahova.

After sprinkling the festal icon of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem with holy water, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel addressed those present underscoring four main spiritual meanings of the Palm Sunday Procession.

1. Commemoration of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem

'First, the Palm Sunday Procession is a commemoration of the Entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, as He came from the village of Bethania, where he rose his friend Lazarus from the dead,' Patriarch Daniel explained April 20, 2019.

2. Prediction of the Lord's Passions and Resurrection

'Second, the Palm Sunday Procession is the prediction of the passions and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also the anticipation of the universal resurrection of all humans, as we chant in the troparion that we heard many times during this pilgrimage,' the Patriarch went on saying.

His Beatitude stressed that the Raising of Lazarus from the dead, celebrated on Palm Sunday Eve, is a prediction of the universal resurrection at the end of the ages, when all people from all times, places, and nations will be raised from the dead.

'This general resurrection is anticipated by the Raising of Lazarus from the dead, but particularly through Christ's Resurrection,' Patriarch Daniel noted.

3. Professing the faith to the city

'Third, the Palm Sunday Procession is a profession of the Christian faith to the city, through communion in procession.'

The Patriarch of Romania said that by taking part in the march we become public witnesses to the city, not only inside our smaller or larger, parish or monastery church.

‘Coming out of our parish and monastery churches and walking across a part of the city we profess our faith in Jesus Christ.’

”Communion in procession

Referring to ‘the communion in procession’, His Beatitude said that it represents a communion of those who advance from one point to another, from one church to another church.

‘This communion in procession is expressed through pilgrimage. It is a communion of faith, but also a unity of prayer and chant.’

‘This means that we have brought the profession of our faith out of the church walls and showed it publicly to the city.’

4. Blessing for society

‘Fourth, as a continuation of the prayers offered for the blessing of palm branches and concluded with the blessing of the icon of the Lord’s Entry into Jerusalem, the Palm Sunday Procession is a blessing for society and a joy for the souls,’ Patriarch Daniel said.

He noted that many blessings are poured out upon those who attend the procession and all citizens through these prayers and church hymns.

‘They return to their homes in different neighbourhoods, from different parts of the capital, being bearers of blessing and joy. Therefore, it involves bringing joy to people, bringing gladness to the soul.’

‘Who gives this joy?’ the Patriarch asked. ‘Christ the Lord Himself. He is the core of the pilgrimage.’

‘His icon shows us that He is present here,’ the Patriarch explained.

”Christ, the core of pilgrimage

‘One of the kontakia of the Akathist of the Lord’s Entry into Jerusalem notes that Jesus Christ now mystically enters into our soul as He once entered into Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem is not only a city, it is also our soul, our family, our home.’

Insisting on Christ’s presence in the centre of the pilgrimage, but also inside the

believers' souls, His Beatitude said that 'Christ does not want to be the opposite of us, Someone in front of us, but the Life of our life. He wants to live in us, to make us a holy temple, a dwelling place of the Holy Trinity.'

The Patriarch of Romania underscored that 'when we live in a troubled, lonely, fragmented and extremely saddened world, there is a greater need for the presence of Christ Who brings us His peace, joy, the presence of His blessing, His humble and merciful love.'

At the end of his homily delivered on the doorsteps of the patriarchal residence, His Beatitude reminded that 'pilgrimage begins from a church and concludes at another church because a painted Orthodox church that was consecrated is the image of the heavenly Jerusalem,' adding that 'on this feast day we bring to Christ not only flowers, palm branches, tree branches, but we also bring to him the flowers of the virtues gathered during the forty days of Lent.'

'This holy tradition of the Palm Sunday procession is a source of blessing,' Patriarch Daniel said stressing that the procession 'is not just a commemoration, but also an update, a renewal, a presence of the Holy Spirit of Christ Who once entered into Jerusalem and now enters into the Jerusalem of our souls.'

'So, those who participate in this pilgrimage are blessed and bearers of blessing to society and city,' His Beatitude said ending his speech.

Thanks were addressed to the participants and the organizers of the procession.

The Patriarch prayed for joy and Christ's blessing and 'to repay all those who contributed to organizing this pilgrimage.'

Additional thanks were addressed to the public institutions in Bucharest, which collaborated with the Orthodox Archdiocese of Bucharest in this regard.

Source and Photography courtesy of Basilica.ro / Raluca Ene